

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action mailed July 21, 2003, Applicant requests reconsideration in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks. Claims 2-4 and 7-21 have been deleted without prejudice. Upon entry of this amendment, claims 1, 5-6 and 22-40 are pending, with claims 1, 22, 27, 32 and 37 being independent claims.

Applicant thanks Examiner Hashmi for courtesies extended to Kristin D. Wheeler during a telephone interview on January 14, 2004. Below is a summary of the substance of the interview.

Claim Rejections 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over U.S. Pat. No. 5,272,349 to Perry, III (Perry) in view of U.S. Pat. No. 4,314,157 to Gaines (Gaines) and further in view of U.S. Pat. No. 3,939,355 to Rosauer (Rosauer). The rejections based on deleted claims 2-4 and 7-21 are now moot. Claims 1, 5-6, 22-25, 27-28, 30, 32-35 and 37-40 have been amended. No new matter has been added. Applicant believes that claims 1, 5-6 and 22-40 patentably distinguish over the cited references as discussed in more detail below.

Claims 1-8

Amended independent claim 1 is directed to a radiographic camera comprising a camera suitable for use in a pipeline, a jacket having front end and a back end opposite the front end and a handle positioned between the front and back ends of the jacket, the jacket adapted to be removably secured to the camera and the camera being functional with or without the jacket.

The Examiner states that Perry discloses a housing or jacket, that Gaines discloses a handle positioned between the front and back ends of the jacket or housing, and that Rosauer discloses a reinforcement structure in the handle thereby making claim 1 unpatentable.

Applicant respectfully traverses.

Claim 1 has been amended to delete the recitation of the reinforcement structure of the handle and to focus on the removability aspect of the handle. Support may be found in the specification at least at page 1, lines 16-22, and page 7, lines 22-30. The current rejection is

moot, as none of the cited references show or suggest a removable jacket for a radiographic camera such that the camera is functional or without the jacket.

Amended claims 5 and 6 depend from claim 1 and are patentable for at least the same reasons.

Claims 22-26

Applicant has amended independent claim 22 to clarify that the housing of the radiographic camera has a first end and a second end of the housing. A lock assembly is provided at a second opening in the second end of the housing, while a radiation shield protector, adapted to selectively block and unblock a first opening in the first end of the housing, is provided between a first endplate and a front plate at the first end of the housing. During the interview, the Examiner indicated that he would favorably consider such an amended claim, and similarly amended claims described further below, in that the claim appeared to define over the cited references.

As discussed with the Examiner during the interview, none of the cited references show any type of radiation shield protector at the first side of the camera housing. For example, Gaines and Rosauer focus on the side of the camera with the lock assembly. Gaines and Rosauer only teach use of a plug in the opening at the other side of the housing that receives the guide cables. Moreover, claim 22 now recites that the lock assembly functions independently of the radiation shield protector and guide cable fitting. Thus, the claim differentiates for at least this reason, from Applicant's own art cited in an Information Disclosure Statement filed herewith and described in U.S. Pat. No. 5,418,379 cited previously.

Thus, claim 22 patentably distinguishes over the cited references.

Amended claims 23-25 and claim 26 depend from claim 22 and are patentable for at least the same reasons.

Claims 27-31

Applicant has amended independent claim 27 to clarify that the first opening is opposite the second opening on the housing. In claim 27, a lock assembly is provided in communication with the housing at the first opening and a front plate with a rotor is provided at the second

opening. The rotor has a radiation shield aligned with the second opening in a locked position and is adapted to be unlockable when a fitting is engaged in a hole in a front plate. The front plate does not include a removable plug for insertion in the hole of the front plate when in a storage condition.

As discussed with the Examiner, the cited references focus on the side of the camera with the lock assembly. Specifically, Gaines and Rosauer focus on the construction of the lock assembly and only disclose use of a plug to block the opening on the opposite side of the camera. As amended, the claim recites that the front plate does not include such a plug for insertion in the front plate hole. Moreover, the cited references fail to disclose a rotor at that opening which is unlockable when a fitting is engaged with the hole in the front plate to align a second rotor hole with the second opening upon rotation of the rotor.

Thus, claim 27 patentably distinguishes over the cited references.

Amended claims 28 and 30 and claims 29 and 31 depend from claim 27 and are patentable for at least the same reasons.

Claims 32-36

Applicant amended independent claim 32, directed to a connector assembly for a radiographic camera, to clarify that the radiation shield protector is provided with the connection element of the camera. The radiation shield protector is movable between blocking and unblocking positions to block and unblock a radiation source opening in the camera through which a radiation source can pass. The radiation source cannot move through the radiation source opening until the radiation shield protector is moved to the unblocking position. The position of the radiation shield protector is independent of operation of a lock assembly.

As discussed with the Examiner, none of the cited references disclose a camera with a radiation shield protector provided with the connection element of the camera. The cited references fail to disclose or suggest a radiation shield protector that may be moved to unblock the radiation source opening to allow the radiation source to move through the opening, the radiation shield protector having a lock adapted to unlock the radiation shield protector upon activation of a key outside the camera. As discussed above, Gaines and Rosauer disclose lock assemblies, which do not block the radiation source opening through which the source can pass.

Both Gaines and Rosauer merely show plugs that are screwed onto the opening at the connector side of the camera.

Thus, claim 32 patentably distinguishes over the cited references.

Amended claims 33-35 and claim 36 depend from claim 32 and are patentable for at least the same reasons.

Claims 37-40

Applicants have amended independent claim 37, directed to a method of operating a radiation camera, to clarify that a radiation shield protector that blocks a radiation source opening is at a connector assembly in the camera and is released by attaching a guide cable fitting to the connector assembly. Additionally, the claim was amended to clarify that the radiation shield protector is moved to unblock the radiation source opening by activating a mechanism outside a housing of the camera at the connector assembly end of the camera. The steps of releasing and moving the radiation shield protector are independent of operation of a lock assembly of the camera.

As discussed above and with the Examiner, none of the cited references show a radiation shield protector at the connector assembly end of a radiation camera. For example, Gaines and Rosauer only show a plug on the connector side of the camera. None of the cited references teach moving a radiation shield protector at the connector assembly to unblock the radiation source opening, and moving the radiation source from within the camera through the radiation source opening. The cited references simply do not teach the claimed method.

Thus, claim 37 patentably distinguishes over the cited references.

Amended claims 38-40 depend from claim 37 and are patentable for at least the same reasons.

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CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, this application should now be in condition for allowance. A notice to this effect is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes, after this amendment, that the application is not in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the Applicant's attorney at the telephone number listed below.

If this response is not considered timely filed and if a request for an extension of time is otherwise absent, Applicant hereby requests any necessary extension of time. If there is a fee occasioned by this response, including an extension fee, that is not covered by an enclosed check, please charge any deficiency to Deposit Account No. 23/2825.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven J. Grenier, Applicant

By: 
Robert E. Hunt , Reg. No.: 39,231
Kristin D. Wheeler, Reg. No. 43,583
WOLF, GREENFIELD & SACKS, P.C.
600 Atlantic Avenue
Boston, Massachusetts 02210-2211
Telephone: (617) 720-3500

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